

Remarks

Applicants have amended the previously rejected claims to include allowable subject matter, namely the subject matter associated with dependent allowed dependent claims 5, 18, and 20. These amendments are believed to obviate the rejections set forth in the Office Action and are made without prejudice and without conceding the Examiner's rejections with respect to the same.

New claim 21 is added and includes limitations similar to the limitations recited in pre-amended claim 1, with the exception of the 'pictorial diagram' being changed to a 'boundary diagram.' The Chandler reference fails to disclose or suggest the use of a boundary diagram. While the hierarchy window 360 in the Chandler reference pictorially illustrates the functions and tasks to be completed, it is not a boundary diagram and fails to pictorially illustrate the interaction between tasks. The Chandler task list on illustrates a sequence of tasks to be completed. The claim boundary diagram, in contrast, illustrates the interaction between components and not just the sequence of tasks to be completed. The ability to illustrate the interactions between components is beneficial in that it allows an FMEA analyst to visually inspect the influence of one component on another. The sequence of tasks does not. As such, the Applicants respectfully submit new claim 21 is patentable and nonobvious over the Chandler reference.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit each rejection has been fully replied to and that the case is in condition to pass to issue. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the case to issue and is invited to contact the undersigned if it would further prosecution of the case to issue. Please charge any fees or credit any overpayments as a result of the filing of this paper to our Deposit Account No. 02-3978.

Respectfully submitted,
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